The Status Line

Vol. V/No. 4 —Fall 1986— Glamour Edition

Soon To Be A Major Interactive Story…

HOLLYWOOD HIJINX

Who can forget those wonderful childhood summers spent with your Aunt Hildegarde and Uncle Buddy Burbank? Uncle Buddy was a Hollywood mogul, Aunt Hildegarde his loving (and very rich) wife. They had no children of their own, but you and your cousins were always welcome at their sprawling Malibu estate.

The house itself was loads of fun. There was the luxurious movie theater, the gaudy round satin-covered bed, the gold-plated bathroom faucets in the shape of Oscars, and the goofy props from old Buddy Burbank movies. And the grounds had everything from a private beach to a hedge maze, where you usually managed to get lost.

Your aunt and uncle were fun, too. Uncle Buddy, who dressed in polyester leisure suits and gold chains, always had a practical joke up his sleeve. And, despite her eccentricities, Aunt Hildy loved you like a mother.

You even enjoyed your Cousin Herman, who often visited at the same time as you. You and Herman would team up together to play games in the garden or help Aunt Hildegarde with her dinner parties. There was also the time he got sick in the top bunk when you were sleeping in the bottom one. Or the time he tripped you on the beach stairs and you fell and got a bloody nose. But you were able to forgive and forget in the name of cousinly love.

Well, those days are all behind you. Uncle Buddy has been dead for several years, and now Aunt Hildegarde has passed away, too. It seems like the end of an era — until you learn that *you've* inherited the entire estate. There's just one quirky stipulation: you can only claim your booty if you find ten "treasures" from old Buddy Burbank movies hidden throughout the house and grounds. If you can't find the treasures in one night, you lose the whole caboodle.

That's the premise of *Hollywood Hijinx*™, the new interactive story from Infocom. It sends you on a zany treasure hunt through a

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Aunt Hildegarde and Uncle Buddy would be proud of the Hollywood Hijinx *package.*

Breakthrough In Continuing Education…

THE ENCHANTER TRILOGY

Are you tired of dragging around heavy swords? Exhausted from bloody battles with trolls and thieves? Feeling that it's all gotten a bit too ... well, physical?

It's time to step up to a more cerebral, white-collar underground career! Become an enchanter! In only three lessons, we can turn you from a novice magician into a full-fledged member of the Circle of Enchanters, and then, if you play your cards right, into the head of the Circle itself!

Previously, it took almost three years to complete this course, and it cost over 120 dollars. But now, thanks to extensive research, innovative modern packaging, and a collaboration between the Frobozz Magic Magic Equipment Company and Crazy Dimwit's, Infocom brings you the entire *Enchanter*® *Trilogy* for only $69.95 for the Commodore 64/128 and $79.95 for the IBM and Apple II series.

The Great Underground Empire Tech Correspondence Course in Enchanting contains these three lessons:

In the first lesson, *Enchanter*, you are given an extensive grounding in spellcraft as you are sent by the Circle of Enchanters to defeat the evil warlock Krill and prevent the ruination of the land. As *Games* magazine said, "This is an impressive start for a new trilogy and a must for all adventure gamers." *Enchanter* was written by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank, the co-authors of the *Zork*® *Trilogy*.

In the second lesson, *Sorcerer*™, your defeat of Krill has promoted you to full membership in the Circle. Everything looks rosy until Belboz, the head of the Circle, disappears under mysterious circumstances. Ultimately you must use time-travel, transformation, and general trickiness to destroy the demon Jeearr, who's at the bottom of it all. *Analog Computing* said, "*Sorcerer* does live up to the precedent set for it by *Enchanter* and, in many respects, surpasses it." *Sorcerer* was written by Steve Meretzky, author of *Planetfall*®, co-author of *The Hitchhiker's*

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Talk to animals! Fly like a bat! Turn enemies into newts! It's all possible in The Enchanter Trilogy.

The Status Line

Writers: Tom Bok, Gary Brennan, Elizabeth Langosy, Dave Lebling, Steve Meretzky, Jonathan Palace, Tom Veldran

Production: Cynthia Curtis, Susan Goldman, Jonathan Palace

Supposed Boss: Susan Goldman

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NY Times Can't Be GIVEN Away

To Whom It May Concern:

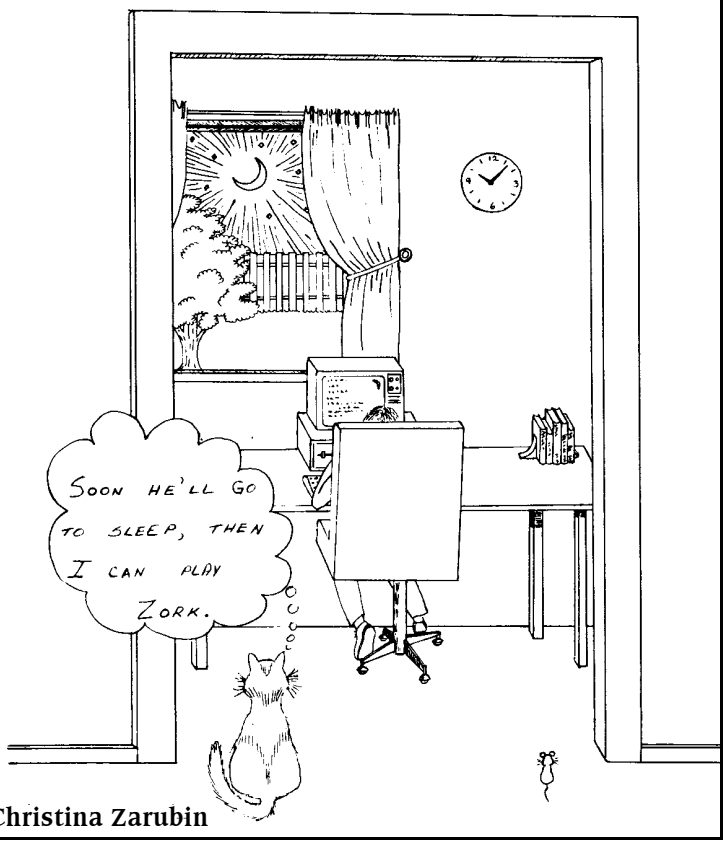
When I got my *Status Line* a few days ago, I was thrilled to learn that I had named one of the greatest newsletters of all time. Then I remembered the prize I had won; a year's subscription to The New York Times. Now what, exactly, am I going to do with that? I can't use it to line a bird cage, because I don't even have a bird! Then I thought, this prize must be costing those Infocommies an arm and a leg (or two). They would save big bucks if they just sent me an Infocom game for my Apple IIc, such as *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*.

I haven't heard anything from The New York Times yet about my subscription, so maybe it's not too late to cancel it, saving Infocom from financial ruin. How about it? Who in their right mind would give away an expensive prize made by some other company when they could simply give away a relatively inexpensive Infocom game, and boost their company's image at the same time? Please seriously consider this idea, and let me know what you think.

Sincerely,

Cliff Tuel
San Jose, CA

P.S. If you decide to waste your money on the newspaper, I'll read it anyway.



Christina Zarubin

Enchanter Trilogy

(continued from page 1)

Guide to the Galaxy™, and author of *A Mind Forever Voyaging*™ and *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*™.

The third lesson, *Spellbreaker*™, is a tricky final exam, for now you have become Head of the Circle of Enchanters. Ready to relax and take it easy, you have no such luck: magic itself appears to be failing, the populace is up in arms, and the most dangerous opponent yet is behind it all. *Analog Computing* said "*Spellbreaker* is a vast, sprawling game, finely detailed, intricately designed. It can be easily and wholeheartedly recommended, a grand conclusion to a great series." *Spellbreaker* was written by Dave Lebling.

The *Enchanter Trilogy* comes in a beautiful slipcased package suitable for awed contemplation, tasteful holiday gift-giving, or annoying friends and relations who think Infocom is into occultism. All three games have been updated with the latest and best bug fixes, including the legendary OOPS command. All the feelies you know and love are there, including the lovely field guide to the "Creatures of Frobozz" (*Sorcerer*) and five portraits of renowned Enchanters (*Spellbreaker*). The *Enchanter Trilogy* is limited while supplies last.

Hitchhiker's on Radio

We are proud to announce that once again Infocom has made it possible for all radio listeners to pick up *Hitchhiker's*! Before it was an interactive story, before it was a TV show, before it was converted into four phenomenal best-selling books, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was a twelve-part radio serial on Britain's BBC. Now Infocom is sponsoring a rebroadcast of the entire serial on National Public Radio (NPR).

This is radio as you've never heard it before. Conceived and written by Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide* radio serial is hilarious and contains some of the best sound effects ever produced. Before the interactive story came out, many considered this radio serial the best rendition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide*. If you have never heard it, you will find it funny, outrageous, mindboggling, and well worth listening to.

Beginning in January 1987, episodes will be made available to public radio stations across the country for inclusion in their schedules. Check local program listings for times — each station puts together its own schedule independently. If your local public radio station is not carrying the show, call to point out that it is available and that you are interested in it (phone calls are surprisingly effective). Why is Infocom running *Hitchhiker's* again two years later? Find out in the next exciting issue of *The Status Line*!

In *Planetfall*, using naughty words causes the response "Such language from an ensign in the Stellar Patrol!" The reason we mention this is an old but still amusing quote we dug up recently. It's from an article on interactive fiction in the March 18, 1985, issue of *People* magazine:

In Planetfall*, if you tell the computer to "go to hell" it replies, "Such language from an* enzyme *in the stellar patrol!"*

DEAR

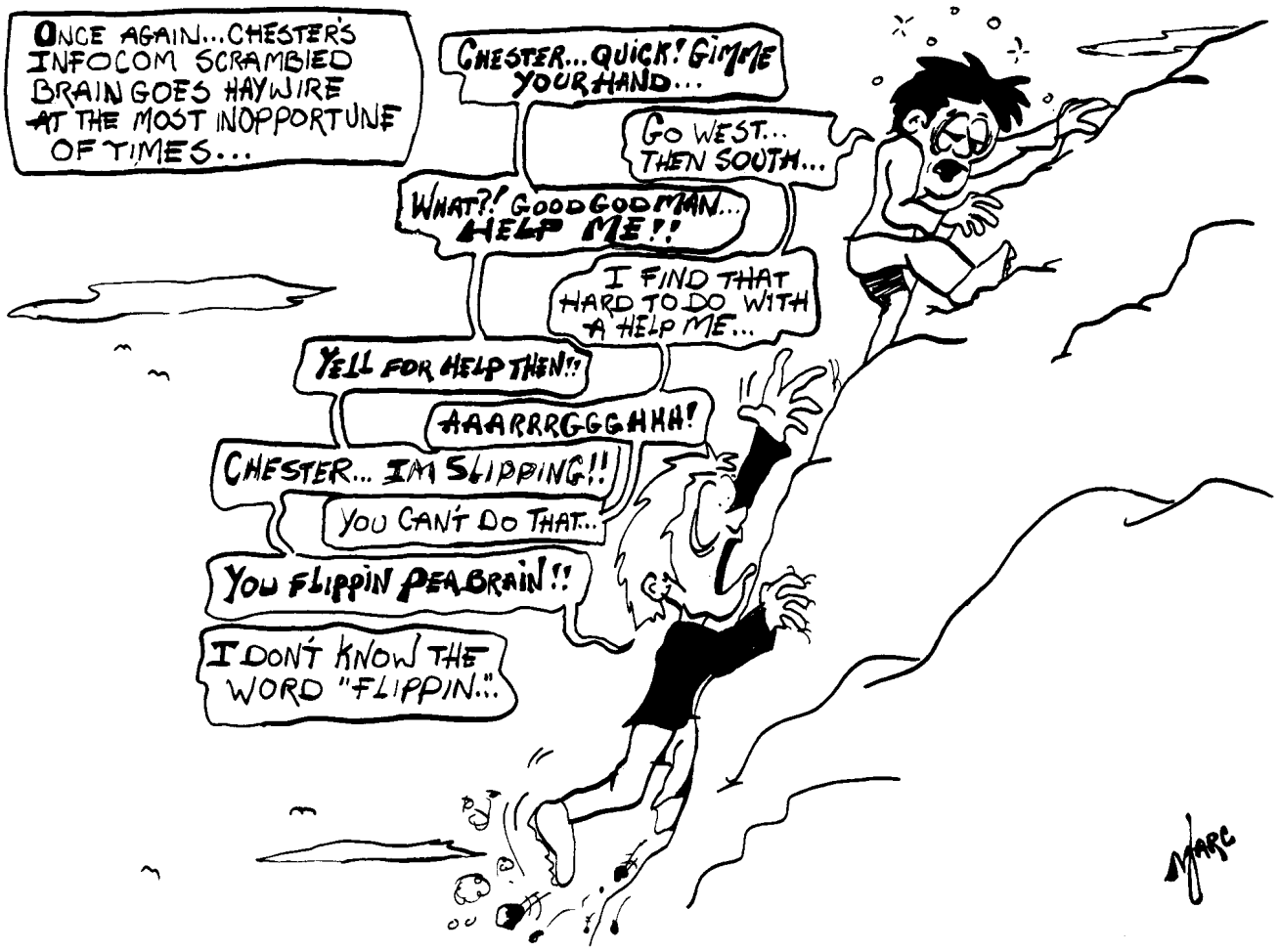
Dear Miss Underground Manners:

I am a middle-aged gnome who likes to think he practices impeccable manners. Recently, my next-tunnel neighbor, an ogre of good repute and social standing, invited me to be present at his son's wedding. Naturally, I consented cheerfully. When the date arrived, I appeared at the ceremony, only to find that my wife and children had been chopped up and were to be served as hors d'oeuvres at the reception. Of course I was shocked to learn that my family was now a bowl of flesh balls. How can I express my displeasure to my host?

Gentle Reader:

You certainly have justification to

Marc Sylvester



MISS UNDERGROUND MANNERS

feel shocked. As we all know, flesh balls have been considered an absolute "faux pas" since Dundor of Vriminax quashed the Yippie Rebellion, in 466 GUE. You might pleasantly suggest to your host that he instead serve flesh strips in cream-cheese, spread over delicate wafers, as is the custom these days.

Dear Miss Underground Manners:

I am a dragon on the debutante circuit. What are the formal rules for immolating humans?

Gentle Reader:

Miss Underground Manners finds the following rules applicable:

1) One should always introduce oneself before incinerating the human in question. Making a bad impression could injure your sterling reputation, should your victim somehow manage to survive.

2) Immolation can often be an embarrassing moment for a human. There's no need to mock or intimidate your victim with malicious peals of laughter or wicked masks of hatred. Instead, put him at ease with a compliment, or a light remark.

3) If recent gourmet experiences have included such elements as garlic, onion, or rotgrub, one should politely excuse oneself and rinse one's maw with a fresh, minty solution before spewing flames at the human. Humans can be particularly sensitive to that most unpleasant phenomenon known as "bad breath."

Dear Miss Underground Manners:

On a recent Sunday jaunt through a portion of the Underground Empire, in search of countless, untold fortunes as well as something to do, I found that I was encountering many more ravenous dungeon denizens than on previous trips. Why, only ten minutes into the trip, my right arm was lopped off completely in a surprise attack by a band of samurai worms! By midday, I found that killing had become second nature; I was hacking up just about everything that moved. At one point, as I was retrieving my pitchfork from a young man's chest, I realized that he was not, in fact, a scheming rogue or a slavering mass of claws and fangs; it was little Davey, my neighbor's son. (Apparently, he was selling flowers to support the elderly.) Have I committed a serious social blunder?

Gentle Reader:

You, sir, have indeed violated what Miss Underground Manners would consider a cardinal rule of etiquette, even by dungeon standards. The recent loss of one's right arm is no excuse for holding one's fork in the left hand, which is used only when one is mashing vegetables or gathering peas. (Also, never confuse your pitchfork with your dessert fork.)

Hollywood Hijinx

(continued from page 1)

house that's as eccentric as its owners. After a night spent in its deserted rooms, you might be feeling a little wacky, too. For although you assume Aunt Hildegarde and Uncle Buddy wouldn't make it too hard for you to find the treasures, the puzzles you must solve prove that they weren't just kidding.

Hollywood Hijinx was written by "Hollywood" Dave Anderson, whose Hawaiian shirts and baggy shorts fit right in with the beach mural and tropical fish that decorate his Infocom office. To get YOU in the California mood, the package includes a gossip-filled copy of Tinselworld Magazine, your Aunt Hildegarde's will, an autographed photo of your Uncle Buddy, and a lucky palm tree swizzle stick.

Combining the glitz of Tinseltown with the offbeat humor of a "B" movie, *Hollywood Hijinx* is cram-packed with puzzles that will test the wits and tickle the ribs of both first-time and experienced players. Numerous amusing anecdotes about your childhood with Herman, Buddy, and Hildegarde add to the fun. *Hollywood Hijinx* will be available in February for a wide variety of personal computers, at a suggested retail price of $34.95 for Atari XL/XE and Commodore 64/128 and $39.95 for all other systems.

Max Yaks Null Set

Some of you have probably noticed a change in the name of this column from the previous issue. You may remember that it *was* titled "News Inside Infocom." Well, I received a rather threatening letter from the lawyers of News Inside the Society of Respiratory Surgeons stating that if I did not stop using the old name they would rip out my lungs and use them as weather balloons. Hence the new name. Now the news ... **LOVE NOTES:** It used to be that an old-fashioned love song was plucked out on a beat-up old six-string by the one who loved you. Not anymore. Testing Manager Suzanne Frank was recently presented with a cassette tape on which her new beau lavished praise upon praise in state-of-the-art stereophonic sound. You know, multiple tracks, electronic keyboards, and four-part harmony. Suzanne, Suzanne, I think he likes you ... I'm negotiating to have "Suzanne, Suzanne" released on *The Status Line* label for Christmas ... **WEDRUM:** Marc Blank, ex-Infocom VP and distinguished author of such Info-Favorites as *Zork, Deadline*®, and TN20, is to be married in late December. The marriage will take place in the same hotel at which *The Shining* was filmed. Don't get snowed in you two ... **THE ART OF PARTIES:** A major end-of-summer-super-surprise-soiree was held in honor of Ernie (Burnin' Ernie) Brogmus. Ernie, denizen of Boston's darkest demi-mondes, is on his way to the Western Front, aka Activision. The party was highlighted by an appearance of the Burnin' Flames. The Flames are composed of Info-vaudevillians Debbie Reilly and Carol Brangwyn. More about these two subtle performers later, much later ... While Ernie's party definitely drew the A-list, the same cannot be said for the Harvard 350th birthday bash. This massive chow-down featured His Royal Majesty Prince Charles as its featured eater. Tester Tom Bok, infamous offspring of Harvard Prez Derek Bok, was brushed off by his original table-mate, Gloria Steinem, only to be left seated with a secret service agent all evening. Tom claimed the chap was interesting enough but kept confusing his butter-knife with his UZI. The evening was not a total loss, however: Tom did get a much-sought-after autograph of Prince Charles for yours truly. His Royal Wit inscribed one of those "1000 stamps, only $2.95" matchbook covers (one picturing himself and Lady Di) with the most unprincely yet utterly charming "Chuck" ... **PALM-TRENEUR:** Jeff O'Neill, author of *Ballyhoo*®, has been bitten by the entrepreneurial bug that is so pervasive here in the Bay State. Jeff's scheme involves the mass production of life-size, all-weather artificial palm trees for the deprived masses of New England ... **MEET THE NEW BOSS:** Susan Goldman has been named the new Editrix of *The Status Line*. Susan's background is mainly shopping. "When you've read as many shopping mall sales circulars as I have, the newsprint just gets into your blood," says Ms. Goldman. Goldman's future plans for the paper include changing the name to *The Credit Line* ... **JOBS OF THE STARS:** Not everyone came to Infocom from the computer field. Take Infotester Gary Brennan. He was a farmer before he joined Infocom: a sponge farmer. It was Gary's task to keep the cute little kitchen-helpers-to-be healthy and happy, before they were thrown into blenders by his bosses at MIT ... **HOLY HACKER:** If you sometimes feel a Revelation coming on, while playing one of Steve Meretzky's games (*Planetfall, Sorcerer, AMFV* et blah), there's a good reason for that. It's because he does some of his best hacking late at night when the only light in his office is coming from his Jesus nite-lite... AMEN...

Mark Rollin

Cartoonist Wanted

In our last issue, we neglected to credit Jim Chan of Rowland Height, CA, for his cartoon portraying the "authors of Hitchhiker's Guide."

If you'd like to submit a cartoon for publication, send it to The Status Line Cartoons, Infocom, Inc., 125 CambridgePark Drive, Cambridge, MA 02140. All cartoons must be in black ink on white, unlined paper. Please don't fold your cartoon! All submissions become property of Infocom. If we print your cartoon, we'll send you a free game of your choice. Don't forget to include your name, address, phone number, the title of the game you'd like to win, and the computer system you'd like the game to run on.

23 Reasons to Own a Computer

A Mind Forever Voyaging by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1985). Explore a frighteningly possible future as Prism, the first true artificial intelligence. Senator Ryder's Plan looks pretty good — or does it? The closest any computer game has come to literature: there are few puzzles to solve in this imaginative and chilling story where *you* are the main character.

●

Ballyhoo by Jeff O'Neill (Standard, 1986). Winding up a day at the circus, you become enmeshed in a kidnapping plot that takes you behind the scenes of The Travelling Circus That Time Forgot. You'll have to tame lions, scare an elephant, walk a tightrope, and perform other circus acts to win the game. Full of seedy circus atmosphere, rich with humor, and peopled with circus freaks like Andrew/Jenny (half man, half woman) and the 28-inch-tall Comrade Constantine Thumb.

●

Cutthroats® by Michael Berlyn and Jerry Wolper (Standard, 1984). Diving for treasure in the shipwrecks near Hardscrabble Island was never easy; and now you're partners with some shady characters. Who needs enemies with friends like Pete the Rat and the Weasel? And with cigar-chomping McGinty on your tail, you might end up in over your head.

●

Deadline by Marc Blank (Expert, 1982). Industrialist Marshall Robner is found dead in his Library, the door securely locked from the inside. An obvious suicide. Then why is everyone so defensive? The cast of suspects includes Marshall's charming wife Leslie; their petulant son George; and the family's friends, staff, and business acquaintances.

●

Enchanter by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Standard, 1983). A novice Enchanter must save the world from the nefarious Krill. First of the *Enchanter Trilogy*, where magic outweighs fighting ability. With spell books and scrolls, you'll turn enemies into newts, talk to animals, display fireworks, and perform numerous other magical feats.

●

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams and Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1984). Based on the best-selling book. Arthur Dent doesn't realize his troubles are only beginning when the bulldozer arrives to demolish his house. Putting a fish in your ear never sounded more logical or seemed more difficult. The puzzles are tough, but the wild situations and zany wit make this one of Infocom's most popular games.

●

Infidel® by Michael Berlyn (Advanced, 1983). By lying, cheating, and stealing, you get to within a few hundred yards of a long-lost Egyptian pyramid. Then your crew deserts you. You must find and gain entry to the pyramid, decipher the hieroglyphs, and survive the diabolical traps of the ancient Egyptians, to lay your hands on the sacred treasures that will make you fabulously rich and famous.

●

Leather Goddesses of Phobos by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1986). The year is 1936, and the evil Leather Goddesses plan to turn Earth into their private pleasure palace — unless you can stop them. This racy space-opera comedy is packed with puzzles and can be played in "tame," "suggestive," or "lewd" mode. Equally enjoyable for both men and women; play with a friend!

●

Moonmist™ by Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1986). Spend the night in a haunted English castle, where a ghost threatens you and your friend. Is one of the other castle guests doing the haunting? Four variations on this theme, each shorter than a full-length game, and each with its own riddles and solutions. The suspects include grizzly Dr. Wendish, dashing Ian Fordyce, artist Vivien Pentreath, flighty Tamara Lynd, and others.

●

Planetfall by Steve Meretzky (Standard, 1983). When you joined the Space Patrol, they didn't say you'd end up swabbing the decks. When the ship is destroyed, you must survive on an apparently deserted planet. Fortunately, there's Floyd, a faithful multi-purpose robot with the personality of an eight-year-old, to keep you company. Infocom's first science-fiction comedy.

●

Seastalker® by Stuart Galley and Jim Lawrence (Introductory, 1984). From the videophone in your laboratory, you learn that the Aquadome — an underwater research lab — is being attacked by a "Snark," a giant sea monster. So you're off to the rescue in a special two-seater submarine. An easy game with plenty of hints, full of inventions and faithful helpers at your side.

●

Sorcerer by Steve Meretzky (Advanced, 1984). In the midst of hellhounds, amusement parks, mazes, and flumes, rescue Belboz and defeat the evil demon Jeearr. Second in the *Enchanter Trilogy*; turning yourself into a bat, seeing the future, and probing minds are among your many new powers.

●

Spellbreaker by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1985). Magic fails, and you must make your way through some of the hardest puzzles in interactive fiction to find out why. Exploring an object's mystic connections, making time stand still, and turning yourself into a grue are among the magic spells in this riveting conclusion to the *Enchanter Trilogy*.

●

Starcross® by Dave Lebling (Expert, 1982). You play a down-at-the-heels asteroid miner who discovers a strange alien artifact which has entered the solar system. Once aboard the artifact, you'll meet a number of alien races, including the Rat-Ants, and you are drawn into a puzzle that could give mankind the stars.

●

Suspect® by Dave Lebling (Advanced, 1984). Your editor sends you to cover a society Halloween Party. Then the hostess is murdered, and guess who's the prime suspect? Can you clear yourself before the police arrive? Other party guests include blue-bloods, power brokers, senators, and real-estate magnates. You'll uncover dirty dealings and private affairs among the rich and powerful, as you try to prove you've been framed.

●

Suspended® by Michael Berlyn (Expert, 1983). You are the controlling brain of a totally automated planet, and you must repair the system before the planet's inhabitants "replace" you. You can communicate only through six highly specialized robots: Iris (with visual sensors), Waldo (an industrial robot), Sensa (with a mixture of sensory apparatuses), Auda (with auditory sensors), Whiz (a font of information), and Poet.

●

Trinity™ by Brian Moriarty (Standard, 1986). Travelling through time and space, you must escape from several atomic explosions, to eventually land at the New Mexico desert moments before the first A bomb explodes. Can you change the course of history? An extraordinarily large and thought-provoking game, blending whimsical fantasy, humor, history, and classic puzzle-solving.

●

Wishbringer® by Brian Moriarty (Introductory, 1985). A simple job of letter-carrying turns sinister, as the small town of Festeron becomes twisted and dangerous. The magical Wishbringer stone grants its owner seven wishes, including Flight, Rain, Foresight, and Luck. Puzzles can be solved with magic or without, giving the game unusual replay value.

●

The Witness® by Stuart Galley (Standard, 1983). Los Angeles. 1930's. Freeman Linder wants your help on a little blackmail case, but before your eyes it becomes a murder — his! Written in the hard-boiled Raymond Chandler style, heavy on atmosphere. The suspects include Freeman's beautiful daughter Monica; Phong the butler; and Ralph Stiles, who had something going with Linder's wife.

●

Zork I by Marc Blank and Dave Lebling (Standard, 1980). The story that started it all. Treasure hunts and derring-do in the Great Underground Empire.

●

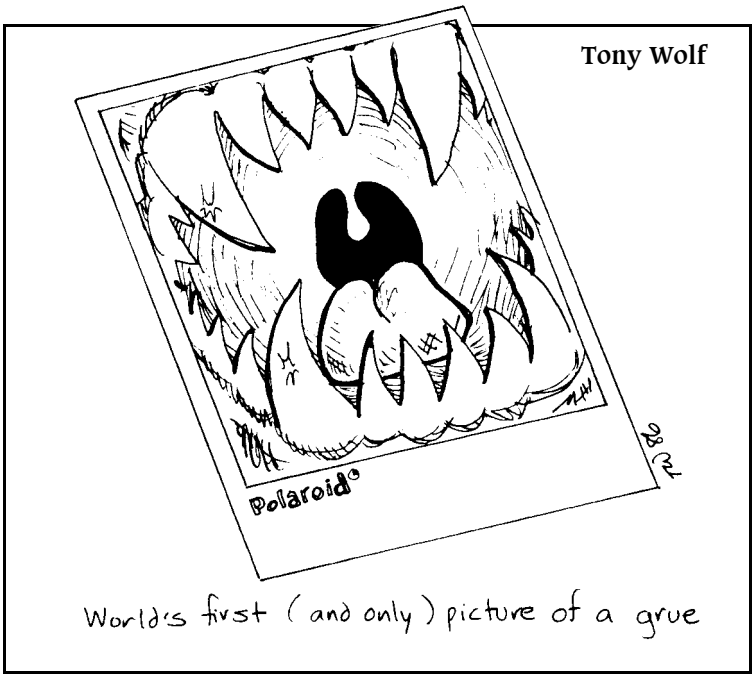
Zork II by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Advanced, 1981). Outwit dragons, demons, and the Wizard of Frobozz.

●

Zork III by Dave Lebling and Marc Blank (Advanced, 1982). Conclusion of the *Zork* Trilogy. An unusual goal and scoring system highlighted by encounters with Dimwit Flathead and the Dungeon Master.

●

Fooblitzky™ A unique board game played on the computer, which blends the logic and deduction of Clue with the chance and spending of Monopoly, and then adds a heavy dose of Infocom humor. A multi-player game with dozens of variations and hours of fun.



INFONEWS GROUNDUP

We put the last three months into the meat grinder and here's what came out:

Great Reviews

You know that we're about as modest as Mae West, so we'll start off with some of the incredible reviews we've gotten.

Fooblitzky, Infocom's loads o' fun graphics strategy game, has been featured in a number of national publications. *II Computing* reported that "Infocom has come out with what has to be the most successful party game for a computer. The game of *Fooblitzky* will have you thinking as hard as you're laughing." *Compute!* said, "The game's mechanics are amusing and simple, but the underlying principles are the same ones which make Monopoly a classic." And *Analog Computing* described it as "a product that might very well be the most-talked about game this year. *Fooblitzky* does for board games what other Infocom works did for books — revolutionize them... computerize them...and bring them into the 21st century — and beyond."

Trinity, Infocom's explosive fantasy, has also received numerous complimentary reviews. Said *Questbusters Newsletter*, "The puzzles are well-structured, the prose among the finest to grace the screen of a monitor. [Author Brian] Moriarty now has two homers in a row, and this one could easily wind up in the parking lot."

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Infocom's up-and-coming romp through the solar system, was featured in a *Newsweek* article on gender-specific software. After starting out with a humorously racy quote from the game, *Newsweek* went on to describe *Leather Goddesses* as "an uproarious role-playing romp that heralds a new breed of computer games." The program contains two versions, one for men and another for women. Mention was also made of *Moonmist*, which blends a gothic setting with the mystery genre, both elements that are traditionally appealing to women.

Cornerstone, Infocom's powerful yet easy to use relational database, was highly rated in an *InfoWorld* special report on file managers. Said *InfoWorld*, "For sheer value and power, we have to give the top rating to Cornerstone...it's difficult to imagine more features in a $99.95 product."

Well, that's it for tooting our horn. Now we'll give you something to toot about. A special offer for you, from Infocom.

Free InvisiClues

That's right, you can get A FREE Infocom *InvisiClues* hint booklet and map with the purchase of *Ballyhoo, Trinity, Leather Goddesses of Phobos,* or *Moonmist*. Look for the special display with the Free Hints and Maps coupons in your local software store. Then send in the coupon along with the warranty/registration card and proof of purchase for any of the games listed above. We'll send you the *InvisiClues* hint booklet and map for that game. You get a free *InvisiClues* for *each* game you buy in our 1986 lineup. So treat yourself, treat your family, buy all four! Offer expires February 15, 1987.

Marathon of the Mind

Yes, kiddies, the Marathon of the Mind might be coming to *your* town. As you may recall, the Marathon of the Mind pits local high school or college teams against each other in a challenging race-to-the-finish to solve an Infocom interactive adventure. Plans are now being completed for marathons coast-to-coast.

On November 8, we'll be at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, November 21, at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle and on December 5, at the Fernbank Science Center in Atlanta. Until the final arrangements are made, we can't tell you which other towns will host this fabulous event. Keep your eye out — skills honed.

Status Line Now Available on CompuServe

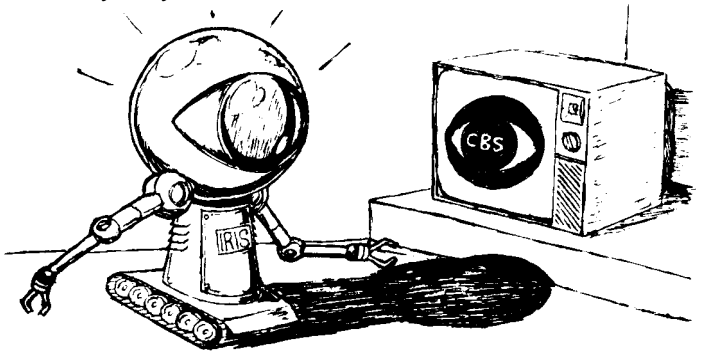
CompuServe subscribers can now read excerpts from *The Status Line* in the Electronics Gamer section. Just type GO TEG from any system prompt and then follow the menus.

Nifty Things To Do with Cornerstone

Building Applications with Cornerstone, written by Laura Buddine and published by Addison-Wesley, is now available in local computer or book stores, as well as directly from Infocom. It contains nineteen Cornerstone applications in over 300 pages and costs only $14.95. Applications range from simple mailing lists and libraries through invoicing and purchase orders to complex systems such as personnel and property management.

You might well ask yourself, "If Cornerstone is so easy to use and has such great documentation, why do I need this book?" Well, you can save time in developing your database by using one of the book's applications as is, or by modifying it to what you need. *Building Applications with Cornerstone* can also generate ideas, allowing you to apply elements from various applications to your own customized system.

D. Anthony Mayette



IRIS DISCOVERS THE TRUTH ABOUT HER PARENTS . . . . .

By Any Other Name

First came "Adventure," and thus was born the name for an entire category of computer games.

But with Infocom leading the way toward more story-oriented, non-fantasy adventure games, the name became misleading and downright irrelevant. A new name for this type of entertainment software was needed. A couple of years ago, we began calling it "interactive fiction." The name has since been adopted by most of our competitors, although a few variations still creep up (computerized fiction, electronic novels, and so forth).

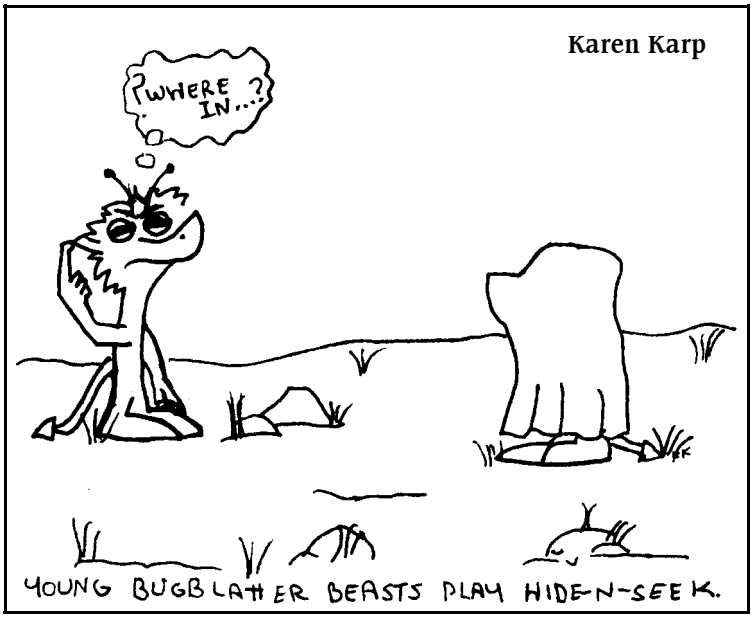
While interactive fiction is an excellently descriptive name, it has a major flaw: six syllables. No word or phrase that long is going to "catch on" and enter the common language. One says, "let's go see a movie," never, "let's go see a moving picture." And moving picture is only *four* syllables.

It gets even worse when you try referring to individual products. "Have you heard that Infocom just announced a new work of interactive fiction?" "Your brother told me that you were writing an interactive fiction story?" Now we're clearly getting into the realm of the linguistically cumbersome.

What's the answer? Some people use IF for short. "I got three eye-effs for my birthday." "Mom, where did you put my new iffie?" Pretty iffy propositions at best.

Then there's the matter of the verb. Back when they were simply adventure games, you *played* them. But does one "play" interactive fiction? Or do you read it? Some Californians here at Infocom have suggested that you "do" interactive fiction. Maybe a less common verb would fit the bill, or perhaps a new verb needs to be invented.

Let's hear what you have to say! What should the category be called? Can you think of any short and catchy phrases for a work of interactive fiction? And what about the verb? Go ahead — flood *The Status Line* mailbag — make our day.



Solutions and Winners to Puzzle 10

In Puzzle Number Ten, we asked entrants to identify the two brief responses, out of a total of thirteen, which *didn't* appear anywhere in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The correct answer was D and K. Here's a list of the thirteen bits of text, and where they appear in the story:

A. The word "no" is not in our hostess' vocabulary. (At the party, as Trillian, SAY "NO" to the hostess when she asks if you want the food or drink you dropped.)

B. You already did that. It's not a merry-go-round. (WALK AROUND THE BULLDOZER a second time, when you're Ford Prefect.)

C. You have two splitting headaches. (DIAGNOSE on Damogran, when you're Zaphod Beeblebrox.)

D. Congratulations. The towel is now covered with slime. (FAKE!)

E. The effect is decorative rather than helpful. (PUT THE TOWEL ON THE BUGBLATTER BEAST.)

F. The bloody thing's been jammed shut for months, now. (OPEN THE WINDOW in the Bedroom.)

G. "We can't leave while you're in trouble, Mr. President!" (On the Dais, when you're Zaphod, after Trillian has pointed the blaster at you, ASK THE GUARDS TO LEAVE.)

H. "Sorry, current course for the legendary lost planet of Magrathea can be countermanded only by Zaphod Beeblebrox." (ASK EDDIE TO TURN ON THE DRIVE.)

I. A footling effort. The shock waves of the Beast's laughter push you back. (THROW THE STONE AT THE BEAST.)

J. You see your environs upside-down and slightly distorted. (LOOK THROUGH THE MAGNIFYING GLASS.)

K. The sun's light is a perfectly horrible shade of orange. (FAKE!)

L. The chair is very comfortable, with a thick plush cushion. (On the Speedboat, as Zaphod, EXAMINE THE SEAT.)

M. This is one of those clever new always-open always-closed bottles. (OPEN or CLOSE THE BOTTLE OF SANTRAGINEAN MINERAL WATER.)

There were 376 entries, of which 73 (19.4%) were correct. (When we did a similar puzzle for *Zork I* a year ago, only 10.1% of the entries were correct.) 154 (41.0%) of the entries had only one right answer, and the remaining 149 (39.6%) of the entries had neither one right.

For all you trivia nuts, the number of photocopied entries for this puzzle, the second for which we allowed photocopying, was 129 (34.3%). The breakdown of answers for each excerpt follows. Note that the total adds up to 200 percent, since every entry includes two excerpts.

EXCERPT	APPEARANCES	PERCENTAGE
A	32	8.5%
B	95	25.3%
C	34	9.0%
D	157	41.8%
E	22	5.9%
F	25	6.6%
G	43	11.4%
H	48	12.8%
I	23	6.1%
J	44	11.7%
K	143	38.0%
L	14	3.7%
M	72	19.1%

Since there were more than 25 entries, we had to hold a drawing to determine the 25 T-shirt winners. It was easily one of the ten most exciting puzzle drawings we've ever had. The resulting winners:

1. Jay Michael, Munster, IN
2. Jeff Yates, Mission Viejo, CA
3. Betty Martin, Moorestown, NJ
4. Cliff Tuel, San Jose, CA
5. Aric DiPiero, Hemlock, MI
6. Lola Russo, Easton, CT
7. Marie Hicks, Madison Heights, MI
8. Kuo-Hsiung Hsu, Oberlin, OH
9. Barbara Hall, Miami, FL
10. Tim Lang, Downieville, CA
11. John Prindle, Texas City, TX
12. Josiah P. Rowe IV, Fredericksburg, VA
13. Karl Feick, Itasca, IL
14. Charles Engebretson, Santa Rita Park, CA
15. Frank Tino, Tewksbury, MA
16. Steve Corum, Billerica, MA
17. Tom McGrath, Silver Spring, MD
18. Tim Rohloff, Bay City, TX
19. Greg Chung, Potomac, MD
20. Alan Hazelton, Fairport, NY
21. Alex Balas, Akron, OH
22. Pearl Tsai, Potomac, MD
23. Mark Weiher, Newburgh, IN
24. Kurt S. Gedig, Indianapolis, IN
25. Korhan Tekin, Mission Viejo, CA

You Said It, Not Us

Rumor has it that some of you think we *make up* the comments in the "Take Their Words For It!" section on our interactive fiction packages. Some of you think that no one *really* wrote (as we said on the *Wishbringer* box), "If I go crazy or become a bum, it's all your fault. I hope you're happy." Or (like we put on the *Spellbreaker* package), "I truly believe that if God had wanted us to lead our own lives, he wouldn't have given us Infocom." Or even (as we felt compelled to include with *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*), "So nerve-wracking and intense I have had to use the rest room several times."

Well, we hereby assure you that all of the above comments and commendations, as well as every other one that you see on our boxes (well, nearly every one), has actually been sent in by a bonafide Infocom player on a warranty form, survey card, or letter. Yes, folks, your words do not go unnoticed. We answer your questions, send you catalogs, put you on our mailing list, and add your comments to our ever-expanding files of possible "Take Their Words For It" quotes. To protect the innocent, we switch around the names and cities on the quotes we use.

Some of the comments on file will probably never see the glossy inside cover of an interactive fiction box, but are still too...well, let's say *entertaining*...to ignore completely. Here are a few:

"As I booted the square ominous disk, shimmering green blips on my screen accompanied my passage into the limitless tunnel of Infocom computer fantasy."

"It's absolutely marvelous, darlings, don't change a thing. Oh, by the way, if you like to wear that tie, fine, but you should pin-stripe your gym socks."

"Gag me with an eating implement. Not even a super nova could scare me."

"I enjoyed the game thoroughly. Then I turned on the computer."

"I frotzed my girlfriend and now I can't get any sleep."

"Splunge, scum queen. Great. Wow. Hard, sexually permissive, 64 Chevy. Bomb. Tit. Oops. Wonker, Ping, Pong, Kong King."

"Can you send me a new space fleet? Mine fell in the toilet and all the buggers drowned."

"The sunglasses I got in the Hitchhiker's package are great for the beach!! I never realized how much harder waterskiing could be."

PUZZLE NUMBER TWELVE

The multiple choice questions below have directions associated with each answer. (For example, the choices for question #1 are N-E-S-W rather than A-B-C-D.) To solve the puzzle, begin at the Round Room in *Zork I*, or the Library Lobby in *Planetfall*, or the Chamber of Ra in *Infidel* (your choice).

Next, answer each question, moving in the direction associated with the correct answer. For example, if you choose *Planetfall*, and thought that the last choice was the correct answer to question #1, you would move WEST and end up in the Library.

Follow this procedure for all eighteen questions. If a question sends you in a direction for which there is no exit from your current location, then you "can't go that way" and end up staying put for that question. Also, assume that all potential exits are passable (e.g., all doors are open) and that no random factors interfere (e.g., the thief in *Zork*, hunger in *Planetfall*).

Once you have finished the last question, note your final location. The name of this location is the answer to the puzzle. NOTE: Giving *any one* of the three answers is sufficient to win the puzzle. There's no bonus for giving more than one correct answer. If you give more than one answer, and *any* of them are incorrect, the entire entry will be considered incorrect.

The answers and winners to Puzzle Number Eleven will appear in the next issue.

1. What is the name of the main character in *1984*?
- N. Alan Churchill
- E. Wilbur Stone
- S. Winston Smith
- W. Albert Smith

2. Identify the person who did *not* sign the U.S. Declaration of Independence.
- N. Benjamin Franklin
- E. John Hancock
- S. George Washington
- W. Thomas Jefferson

3. Which noble gas has the highest atomic number?
- NE. Radon
- SE. Krypton
- SW. Xenon
- NW. Netron

4. Who was Sherlock Holmes's landlady?
- NE. Mrs. Hawthrone
- SE. Mrs. Galworthy
- SW. Mrs. Richards
- NW. Mrs. Hudson

5. In Monopoly, what is the rent for Park Place with 4 houses?
- N. $750
- E. $1050
- S. $1100
- W. $1300

6. What is the most populous city in the southern hemisphere?
- N. Rio de Janeiro
- E. Sao Paulo
- S. Jakarta
- W. Sydney

7. Which of the following is *not* a golf club?
- N. Natter
- E. Brassie
- S. Niblick
- W. Mashie

8. The following poets were all close friends. Who died at the youngest age?
- N. John Keats
- E. George Gordon (Lord Byron)
- S. Percy Bysshe Shelley
- W. James Henry Leigh Hunt

9. Which English Ruler signed the Magna Carta?
- N. King John I
- E. King Richard I (known as The Lion-hearted)
- S. Queen Elizabeth I
- W. William I (known as The Conqueror)

10. In which of these movies did Woody Allen *not* appear?
- N. *What's New Pussycat*
- E. *Love and Death*
- S. *The Front*
- W. *The Purple Rose of Cairo*

11. Which is the largest of the Finger Lakes?
- N. Seneca
- E. Champlain
- S. Cayuga
- W. Canandaigua

12. What school has the largest endowment?
- N. Yale
- E. Harvard
- S. Princeton
- W. MIT

13. Who was born Archibald Leach?
- N. Robin Leech
- E. Alistair Cooke
- S. Cary Grant
- W. Sean Connery

14. With what team did Babe Ruth finish his career?
- NE. The Boston Braves
- SE. The Boston Red Sox
- SW. The New York Yankees
- NW. The Brooklyn Dodgers

15. Which of these magazines has the largest circulation?
- N. *People*
- E. *National Geographic*
- S. *Time*
- W. *Reader's Digest*

16. Which came first in the history of the earth?
- N. First mammals appear
- E. Winged insects appear
- S. Dinosaurs become extinct
- W. The Appalachian Mountains areformed

17. From whence did the advice come, "To thine own self be true"?
- N. *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare
- E. Proverbs, The Bible
- S. The Gospel of Matthew, The Bible
- W. Anonymous axiom, first written in English circa 1250

18. Who dies of "consumption" at the end of "La Boheme"?
- N. Kiri Te Kanawa
- E. Anna Karenina
- S. Lucia di Lammermoor
- W. Mimi

ANSWER: *Zork I* _____

Planetfall _____

Infidel _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

T-Shirt Size (S, M, L, XL) _____

Contest Rules

1. All entries must be submitted on this form or a photocopy of this form.
2. Entries must be received by January 15, 1987.
3. Limit of one entry per person.
4. All entries must be mailed separately.
5. Up to 25 prizes will be awarded. If more than 25 correct answers are received, the winners will be selected randomly.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

Prize

The sure-to-be-a-collector's-item-as-soon-as-we-reprint-them-with-our-new-name New Zork Times Puzzle Winner T-Shirt.

SEND TO:

Infocom
The Status Line Puzzle
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge, MA 02140

When mailing stuff to *The Status Line*, please do not mix things to different "departments" in the same envelope. Puzzle entries, cartoons, "Call the Exterminator" bugs, letters to the editor, envelope designs, etc., all go to different people. Please send each such item separately, addressed to the appropriate editor or department. As you are probably aware, the editors of *The Status* Line spend most of their time on the golf course, the beach, or their analyst's sofa, and are therefore unreliable re-routers of mail.